

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-05 L-02

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NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 ARAE-00 /047 W

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O R 191130Z NOV 74

FM AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6475 IMMEDIATE

INFO AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO

AMCONSUL SAO PAULO

AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO

AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

AMEMBASSY ASUNCION

AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS CZ

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BRASILIA 8683

C O R R E C T E D COPY (FOR DATE TIME GROUP 191130Z VICE 181130Z)

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, BR

SUBJECT: ELECTION RESULTS: PRELIMINARY RETURNS

REF: BRASILIA 8612

SUMMARY: WHILE THE RETURNS ARE NOT COMPLETE, THE
OPPOSITION MDB SEEMS WELL ON THE WAY TO A VICTORY
OF SURPRISING PROPORTIONS, PROBABLY AS A RESULT
INTER ALIA OF THE INCREASED COST OF LIVING, THE
ABSENCE OF GOVERNMENT INTERFERENCE IN THE CAMPAIGN
AND THE ELECTIONS, AND THE MDB'S TACTICALLY SUPERIOR
CHOICE OF CANDIDATES. THERE IS AS YET NO SIGN OF
GOVERNMENT REACTION, AND OPPOSITION LEADERS ARE
CLEARLY SEEKING TO HEAD OFF ANY NEGATIVE DEVELOPMENTS
IN THAT RESPECT. IN THE MEANTIME, IT IS EXPECTED
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THAT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE EXECUTIVE AND

THE POLITICAL CLASS WILL UNDERGO MODIFICATIONS.
END SUMMARY.

1. WHILE THE VOTES ARE STILL BEING COUNTED, THE
OPPOSITION MDB IS AS OF THIS WRITING WELL ON
ITS WAY TO OBTAINING THE HOPED-FOR ONE-THIRD OF
THE CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES (REFTEL), TO GAINING CONTROL
OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLIES OF THE RIO GRANDE DO SUL,
SAO PAULO, GUANABARA, AND RIO DE JANEIRO STATE
(CONTROL OF THE LAST TWO MEANS IT WILL ALSO CONTROL
THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY OF THE NEW STATE), AND TO
SEEING ELECTED BETWEEN 12 AND 15 OF ITS 21 SENATORIAL
CANDIDATES (IT PRESENTED NO CANDIDATE IN MARANHAO).
MDB SENATE VICTORIES SEEM ASSURED IN RIO GRANDE DO SUL,
RIO STATE, SANTA CATARINA, RIO GRANDE DO NORTE, CEARA, PARANA,
PARAIBA, ESPIRITO SANTO, GUANABARA, MINAS GERAIS,
AND SAO PAULO: IN THE LAST THREE, THE MDB CANDIDATE'S
VOTE SO FAR IS MORE THAN DOUBLE THAT OF HIS OPPONENT.

2. REACTION SO FAR HAS INCLUDED AN ELEMENT OF
UNABASHED SURPRISE ON THE PART OF EVERYONE CONCERNED, INCLUDING
THE MDB: WHILE THE MDB HAD GENERALLY BEEN
EXPECTED TO IMPROVE ITS POSITION, NO ONE
(AT LEAST SO FAR) IS CLAIMING TO HAVE FORESEEN AN
MDB VOTE OF THESE PROPORTIONS. THE THREE QUESTIONS
THAT HAVE IMMEDIATELY ARISEN ARE THUS (A) HOW IT
HAPPENED: (B) WHAT IT MEANS AND (C) WILL IT BE
ACCEPTED.

3. THE RELATIVE DEARTH HERE OF PRECISE VOTER
INFORMATION MEANS THAT WE MAY NEVER KNOW FOR SURE
JUST WHAT FACTORS ACCOUNTED IN WHAT DEGREE FOR THE
MDB VOTE. WHAT THE FACTORS ARE, HOWEVER, SEEMS
CLEAR ENOUGH: FIRST, AS WAS WELL NOTED BEFOREHAND,
THIS YEAR'S RISE IN THE COST OF LIVING HAD LED TO
A GROWTH OF DISCONTENT, A FACTOR WHICH THE
UNSCHEDULED WAGE INCREASE (BRASILIA 8159) SOUGHT,
EVIDENTLY WITH PARTIAL SUCCESS AT BEST, TO COUNTER.
OUR PRILIMINARY JUDGEMENT, HOWEVER, IS THAT THE BREAD-
AND-BUTTER PROVIDED THE ESSENTIAL BACKDROP FOR
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POPULAR DISCONTENT, BUT THAT THERE WERE ALSO
IMPORTANT POLITICAL FACTORS AT PLAY. IN THIS SENSE,
WE IDENTIFY TWO ELEMENTS : ONE REFLECTS A PROTEST
AGAINST THE ESSENTIALLY CLOSED SYSTEM OF THE PAST,
A SYSTEM IN WHICH THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT RULED
IN HIGH-HANDED FASHION, IMMUNE TO PUBLIC SENTIMENT
AND IMPERVIOUS TO THE PREROGATIVES (HOWEVER LIMITED)
AND PLEAS OF THE POLITICAL CLASS. SOME PRESS

COMMENTARY HAS EMPHASIZED THE ESSENTIALLY "DEMOCRATIC AVOCATION" OF THE BRAZILIAN PEOPLE. THE OTHER ELEMENT REFLECTS THE FACT THAT THESE ELECTIONS REPRESENTED REAL POLITICS: AS WAS WIDELY COMMENTED DURING THE CAMPAIGN, OFTEN WITH SOME SURPRISE, THE REAL ISSUES WERE DEBATED IN AN UNUSUALLY OPEN ATMOSPHERE, AND PEOPLE BEGAN TO FEEL THAT THEIR VOTE MIGHT REALLY COUNT FOR SOMETHING. WHILE ALL THE RETURNS ARE NOT IN, THE EVIDENCE SO FAR OF A DROP IN ABSTENTIONS AND BLANK VOTES SUPPORTS THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS ELEMENT.

4. THE OPENNESS OF THE CAMPAIGN, THE FACT THAT THESE ELECTIONS WERE GENUINE IN A WAY NOT KNOWN SINCE 1964, IS THE BACKGROUND FOR ANOTHER FACTOR IN THE RELATIVE SHOWING OF THE TWO PARTIES, WHICH IS THE DIFFERENCE IN THE WAY THE TWO PARTIES CHOSE THEIR CANDIDATES. PARTICULARLY WITH REGARD TO SENATORIAL CANDIDATES, ARENA LET ITSELF BE LULLED BY THE HO-HUM ATMOSPHERE OF THE PRE-CAMPAIGN PERIOD, AND IN MANY CASES SETTLED FOR OLD WAR-HORSES OR OTHERWISE SOUGHT TO PLACATE LOCAL FACTION LEADERS OR REWARD LOYAL WORKERS, SOMETIMES TO THE DETRIMENT OF LOCAL PARTY UNITY. THE MDB, ON THE OTHER HAND, LESS HAMPERED BY HIERARCHICAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS, WENT FOR CANDIDATES WITH DEMONSTRATED OR IDENTIFIABLE VOTE APPEAL WHO PROCEEDED TO HIT THE HUSTINGS IN AN ENERGETIC AND EFFECTIVE WAY, AND WITH COHESIVE PARTY SUPPORT. CAUGHT BY SURPRISE WHEN THE CAMPAIGN FLOWERED, ARENA WAS NEVER ABLE TO RECOVER. THE SPREAD OF TELEVISION, A FACTOR WHICH SEVERAL OBSERVERS (INCLUDING SOCIOLOGIST GILBERTO FREYRE) CALLED IMPORTANT TO THE RESULTS, CONFIDENTIAL

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CAN ONLY HAVE SERVED TO MAGNIFY THIS DIFFERENCE, IN THE THIRTIES WHERE THE MDB DERIVES ITS PRINCIPAL SUPPORT IN ADDITION TO CUTTING INTO ARENA'S PREVIOUS STRENGTH IN RURAL AREAS.

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-05 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6476

INFO AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO

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5. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ELECTION RESULTS FOR BRAZIL'S FUTURE WILL OF COURSE DEPEND ALMOST ENTIRELY ON THE REACTION OF THE REVOLUTION, AND SO FAR GOVERNMENT AND ARENA LEADERS ARE REMAINING ESSENTIALLY QUIET. REACTION IN GENERAL STARTS WITH THE QUESTION OF JUST HOW THE RESULTS ARE TO BE DEFINED, A MATTER WHICH BEGAN TO BE DEBATED WHILE THE CAMPAIGN WAS STILL ON. THUS, WHILE THERE WAS A WIDESPREAD TENDENCY TO SPEAK OF AN IMPROVED MDB SHOWING AS AN MDB "VICTORY" (AND EVEN TO SPEAK OF THE MDB CAPTURING A STATE WHEN IN FACT IT HAD ONLY ELECTED ONE SENATOR), SOME OBSERVERS BEGAN TO POINT OUT THAT BECAUSE ARENA WOULD RETAIN A COMFORTABLE MAJORITY IN BOTH HOUSES OF CONGRESS, IT WAS REALLY ARENA WHICH HAD WON.

6. IN ALL BUT THAT SENSE, OF COURSE, THESE ELECTIONS MUST BE COUNTED A VICTORY FOR THE MDB.
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THE REAL QUESTION IS WHETHER AN MDB VICTORY WILL BE CONSIDERED, AT THIS STAGE IN THE COUNTRY'S POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT, A VICTORY FOR BRAZIL, AS SOME ARE ALREADY CALLING IT. IT IS WORTH RECALLING THAT AS THE CAMPAIGN WAS GETTING UNDER

WAY, THE GREAT FEAR -- IN ADMINISTRATION CIRCLES AS WELL -- WAS THAT THE MDB WOULD DO SO POORLY THAT THE REVOLUTION WOULD BE DEPRIVED OF THE BENEFITS (BOTH REAL AND WINDEO-DRESSING) OF ITS EXISTENCE. THERE DEVELOPED THE NOTION THAT THE MDB SHOULD DO WELL, BUT NOT TOO WELL, I.E. NOT SO WELL AS TO APPEAR THREATENING TO THE REGIME ITSELF, OR TO GENERAL PUBLIC AND POLITICAL STABILITY.

7. WHETHER IT WILL SO APPEAR TO THE REVOLUTION REMAINS TO BE SEEN, AND WE WILL BE REPORTING REACTION IN THAT AREA AS IT DEVELOPS. IN THE MEANTIME, MDB LEADERS, CLEARLY HOPING TO AVOID ADVERSE REACTION, ARE PUTTING FORTH THE LINE THAT THE RETURNS WERE HEALTHY AND NOT NEGATIVE, AND THAT THE MDB WILL BEHAVE IN A MEASURED AND STUDIED MANNER. THUS, MDB PRESIDENT ULYSSES GUIMARAES CALLED THE VOTE A DEMONSTRATION OF "THE POLITICAL MATURITY OF THE PEOPLE", WHILE THE MDB NATIONAL CAMPAIGN MANAGER, SENATOR FRANCO MONTORO, PROMISED " THE MDB IS GOING TO SIT DOWN IN ORDER TO THINK ABOUT AND ANALYZE CAREFULLY ALL THESE RESULTS ON THE NATIONAL AND STATE PLANE AND WILL NOT TAKE HASTY ATTITUDES", ADDING THAT THE INCOMING GOVERNORS SHOULD NOT EXPECT "HOSTILE ATTITUDES" FROM THE OPPOSITION MAJORITIES (IN LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLIES WHERE THEY OCCUR) BUT THAT THE "GOVERNMENT MONOLOGUE" WILL BE REPLACED BY A "DEMOCRATIC DIALOGUE". MONTORO ALSO JOINED IN THE WIDESPREAD PRAISE OF GEISEL OR THE ABSENCE OF GOVERNMENT INTERFERENCE IN THE CAMPAIGN AND THE ELECTIONS, DECLARING "IT IS JUST TO RECOGNIZE THAT THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC, WITHIN REGIONAL RESPECT FOR LAW, ASSURED TO THE PARTIES THE INDISPENSABLE LIBERTY FOR POLITICAL DEBATE. THE

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PARTIES, FOR THEIR PART, KNEW HOW TO RISE TO THIS CONFIDENCE AND TO THE RESPONSIBILITY WHICH IS THEIRS IN THE ELECTORAL PROCESS, CARRYING OUT A CAMPAIGN ON A HIGH PLANE WITH AN OBJECTIVE DEBATE ON PROBLEMS OF INTEREST TO THE BRAZILIAN POPULANCE".

8. ON A PRELIMINARY BASIS, IT IS EXPECTED THAT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE EXECUTIVE AND THE POLITICAL CLASS WILL UNDERGO MODIFICATIONS BY THE FORCE OF CIRCUMSTANCES. IT COULD BE FORESEEN THAT THE NEXT CONGRESS WILL BE A

DIFFERENCE CREATURE THAN ITS PREDECESSOR: THE
OPPOSITION'S POWER TO ESTABLISH PRELIMINARY COMMITTEES
OF INQUIRY WITH THE RIGHT TO SUBPOENA
WITNESSES; TO INTERPELLATE CABINET MINISTERS; AND
TO PRESENT CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS FOR CONSIDERATIONS,
WILL RESULT IN A MUCH LIVELIER LEGISLATURE. THE
ARENA IS EXPECTED TO OVERHAUL ITS NATIONAL LEADERSHIP
AND LOCAL PARTY DIRECTORATES AND POSSIBLY TO PLACE
GREATER RELIANCE ON SUCH PARTY STALWARTS AS
SENATORS JOSE SARNEY, DANIEL GRIEGER, LUIZ VIANA
AND SEVERAL OTHERS WHO HAVE GENERALLY BEEN DISREGARDED
BY THE REVOLUTION BECAUSE OF THEIR PROFESSIONAL-
POLITICIAN CAST. THE GOVERNORS OF SAO PAULO,
RIO GRANDE DO SUL, THE FUSION STATE OF RIO DE
JANEIRO, AND POSSIBLY MINAS GERAIS, WILL ALL HAVE
TO COOPERATE WITH STRONG OPPOSITION MAJORITIES
IN THEIR STATE LEGISLATURES. THE ARENA
STRATEGY OF INDIRECT ELECTIONS FOR GOVERNORS
WILL HAVE TO BE REVISED IF THE 1978 GOVERNORSHIPS
OF THE ABOVE STATES ARE NOT TO BE CONCEDED TO
THE MDB. ABOVE ALL, THE INTRA-PARTY SPLITS
WHICH SURFACED UNDER THE ARENA GUBERNATORIAL
SELECTION PROCESS AND WERE SO DRAMATICALLY
CONFIRMED BY THE ELECTIONS WILL HAVE TO BE
SETTLED.

9. AS REPORTED IN REFTTEL, THE 1974 CONGRESSIONAL
ELECTIONS DEVELOPED AN IMPORTANCE FAR BEYOND
WHAT COULD ORDINARILY HAVE BEEN ANTICIPATED.
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THE ABOVE IS A VERY PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT OF
THE DRAMATIC RESULTS OF THOSE ELECTIONS. THE
EMBASSY WILL BE REPORTING CAREFULLY ON THE ABOVE
ISSUES AS THEY ARISE AND ARE MET.
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